

Every Child Learning Every Day



April 2005

An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

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READY TO LEARN

Spend April showers indoors

By Dr. Stan Steiner

Take a child to the library and explore all it has to offer. Corduroy the Bear can prepare you and the other books below are some of what you might find.

"A Hug for You," by Margaret Anastas and illustrated by Susan Winter, HarperCollins, 2005. Baby duckling learns there are lots of reasons to give hugs, but none as special as

the one from mom.

"Corduroy Goes to the Li-

brary," by Don Freeman and illustrated by Lisa McCue, Viking, 2005. This lift-the-flap book is great for introducing your youngster to the library. Corduroy serves as a great guide to the wonders found at a library. That is one field trip every child should make with the help of an adult.

"The Secret," by Lindsay Barrett George, HarperCollins. What do you suppose is the secret? Is rain coming, or the arrival of spring? I wonder what is the secret? All the animals in the forest friend are whispering to one another. You will be surprised to find out at the end of this delightful story.

"Shapes with Ocean Animals," by Melanie Watt, Kids Can Press, 2003/2005. This attractive board book set covers a variety of concepts for preschoolers. The set includes shapes, colors, numbers, opposites, and the alphabet.

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Take time to thank your provider

Dear Reader:

Make time early next month to say a special thank you to the people who make a difference in the lives of our young children and their parents: child care and early education service providers.

May 6 is "National Provider Appreciation Day." This day was started about 10 years ago to recognize the tireless efforts of child care providers, teachers, and educators of young children.

One of the biggest challenges families face is finding someone to care for children while parents work. And in our 24/7 world, this includes finding services available at all hours of the day.

More than 2.8 million people



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

work teaching and caring for young children in our nation. Childcare and early child-

hood education work requires patience and creativity; an ability to nurture, motivate, teach, and influence children; and leadership, organizational, and administrative skills.

Despite the skills required and vital nature of this work, early childhood services remain one of the lowest paying fields of work.

As you consider how to show appreciation, remember the priceless services providers give to parents: the peace of mind that comes from knowing a child is well cared for and is safe while they are at work.

READY TO LEARN

Home store provides number practice

Activities around grocery shopping are a great way for children to learn numbers, learn to count a set of objects, and learn lots of words that will help build pre-reading skills.

You can set up a "store" at home.

Materials:

Start saving empty boxes and cartons from products you buy such as cereal, toothpaste, eggs.

Set up a grocery store at a low table. Label the store with your child's name, like Maria's Grocery.

Set out empty boxes and you can add canned food or plastic fruits and vegetables.

Put a price tag – from 1 to 10 – on each item.

You can use beans or buttons or pennies for money.



What to do:

Tell your child/children that they can go shopping at the grocery

store. Give each child 10 tokens (buttons, pennies, etc.) as money to buy things.

As the child looks at the items for sale, say, "Let's see what we have here to buy today." Help by saying the name of the item or the brand, and then ask the child to repeat the item's name. If you have an older child, she/he might like to be the cashier.

If the child can read the number on the price tag, have him/her count out the tokens needed to buy the

item. For a child who doesn't yet know the number, read the number and help count out the money.

The child probably will need help moving the tokens to one side as they are counted.

You can change the setting to a restaurant and use picture menus (MacDonalds and other fast food restaurants have picture menus), shopping at the shoe store, and so on.

Shopping books:

Here are some books you might check out about shopping: "Let's Go to the Supermarket (Little Bill)," by Lorraine Gallagher, Jane Howell; "Signs at the Store," by Mary Hill; "Supermarket," by Charlotte Doyle.



RESOURCES

Governor's council plans children, family roundtables

The Governor's Coordinating Council for Children and Families will host the sixth annual community roundtables in April and May.

The theme for the events is "Life Beyond the Camouflage." The morning session will include presentations by Idaho's First Lady Patricia Kempthorne and motivational speaker Deb Krum.

The afternoon will be filled with workshops, speakers, entertainment, sharing of community gems, networking and collaboration.

The schedule is as follows:

Rexburg April 28
Lewiston May 4
Mountain Home Air Force Base, May 11
Twin Falls, May 25
Cascade, June 2
Coeur d'Alene, June 6
Video teleconference for Ashton, Mackay, Malad, Montpelier, Soda Springs, Salmon, June 11.

For more information or to register for a Roundtable in your community visit: [www.http://www.gccfc.idaho.gov/](http://www.gccfc.idaho.gov/) or call Vickie Chaney at (208)376-4586.

Gov. Dirk Kempthorne created the Governor's Coordinating Council for Families and Children (GCCFC), made up of representatives of government agencies, civic groups, non-profit organizations, businesses and the faith community. Led by co-chairs First Lady Patricia Kempthorne and Dr. Jerry Hirschfeld, administrator of St. Luke's Children's Hospital, the Governor's Coordinating Council began its work in 2000 to inventory, coordinate and increase the resources available to families and children in Idaho.

NUTRITION

Plant helps kids learn about food

A gardening project is an easy way encourage a young child to eat more vegetables.

April is the perfect time to start growing.

Watching a plant grow and produce vegetables will teach your child where vegetables come from, and as the anticipation builds your child may become more willing to try the new vegetable.

A tomato or green pepper



plant is a good plant to start with. You can start the plants in a small amount of sterile potting soil or in a ready-made potting pellet.

This month, simply fill a clean, empty yogurt container with potting soil, make a small hole in the middle of the soil, and drop in two to three tomato seeds. Place the container in a warm place and water just enough to keep soil damp. Once the seeds begin to sprout, keep the seedlings in a well-lit area, such as your window.

After the seedlings have two sets of leaves and are about 4

inches tall, help your child move the plants to a larger pot. When doing this, be careful to take all the roots and soil from the first pot and place it in the larger pot. Tamp the soil around the base of the plant and water. Keep in a sunny spot and fertilize about once a week.

When the nights are no longer cold, the big pot then can be moved outside to a warm, sunny spot.

Make sure to protect the plant from the wind by placing the pot near your house or garage, or surround it with a protective screen that you can get from your

READY TO LEARN

Being silly helps build sense of humor

A sense of humor is essential to enjoying life. Understanding humor is important in building comprehension and analysis skills later in life. You can help foster a sense of humor in your child.

Birth to 1 year

Smile at your baby. When she laughs, laugh with her and describe the action and emotion. "You are laughing; that's funny isn't it?" Make a silly face for your baby and hold it. Your baby may try to mimic your expression..



1 to 3 years old

Toddlers are often amused by silly surprises such as playing "Peek-a-boo" and having the adult's face change expression with each reveal or having their parents begin singing or dancing at unexpected times.

3 to 5 years old

At this age, children can begin notice that incongruities – things that are different or out of the ordinary – as being funny. Try substitute familiar words in stories or songs with new words or the child's name. For example, "Curious George" would become "Curious Mary" or the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" could become the "Itsy Bitsy Tractor."

ARTS

Birdfeeder project provides learning inspirations

By Jennifer Williams
2002 Idaho Teacher of the Year

April is the perfect month to encourage preschoolers to be bird-watchers. Spotting birds in flight and recognizing them when they stop to eat at your homemade bird-feeder is fun, and can teach valuable lessons and important skills like imitation, interaction, imagination, and empathy.

To make a birdfeeder:

Wash milk jugs. Cut holes in the sides large enough for birds to reach food.

Make small holes below the

larger one for twigs. Fill with bird seed and tie to a tree branch.

Preschoolers can do many activities when birds arrive including:

*Draw and paint pictures of the birds,

*Practice writing letters like BIRD and SEED,

*Do creative "bird dances", ask questions, or

*Make clay birds.

These activities help build the follow art skills:

*Connect lines to enclose shapes,

*Name shapes after drawing them,

*Paint whole areas, or

*Decorate clay.

These sample art experiences also help promote learning.

You may find your child asking "why" often during making the bird feeder and watching the animals. Encourage children to seek their answers.

For more birdhouse projects and family activities visit:

<http://www.osweb.com/kidzkorner/feeder.htm>

http://www.klru.org/kids/games/kidsactivity_feb.html

<http://familycrafts.about.com/cs/birdprojects/a/aa011899.htm>